

▶ OVERVIEW

Many capable students at all grade levels experience frustration and failure in school. It's not because they lack ability, but because they do not have adequate study skills. Good study habits are important for success in school. Knowing how to study effectively fosters feelings of competence, develops positive attitudes, and helps students realize they can control how well they do in school and in life. Good study habits also lay the groundwork for successful work habits as an adult.

Teachers and parents must work together to help students learn good study skills. Preferred learning styles vary from child to child. Students need to discover how they learn best, work out a study system that fits their learning style, and use that system regularly. We designed the Study Skills course to support students in their transition to the Governor's School and to help them develop effective academic habits. This brochure includes suggestions for parents.

Parents of elementary students usually help their students more than parents of adolescents. **However, older students also need parental support and encouragement throughout high school. This is especially true for gifted students entering the Governor's School as they may be facing challenging classes and a heavy workload for**

Three Basic Principles to Enhance Study Skills

1. **Make doing homework a positive experience.**
2. **Make homework a high priority.**
3. **Use homework to teach organization skills and improve learning skills.**

Make Doing Homework A Positive Experience

- ◆ Provide support and praise for homework completion.
- ◆ Be available to provide non-critical assistance.
- ◆ Give students choice in when, where, and how they complete homework assignments.
- ◆ Encourage your students to complete homework well enough that they have a sense of pride and control over their own learning and levels of competence.
- ◆ Use homework preferences in developing a homework schedule. Some students prefer to complete the assignments they like least first, while others prefer to do their easier or favorite work first.
- ◆ If a child dislikes a subject, find ways to make it less frustrating. For example, set a goal of doing five homework problems and then taking a stretch, listening briefly to music, or surfing the web.
- ◆ Encourage your child to participate in study groups with friends. Research shows that students who form study groups perform better than students who always study alone. This is particularly appropriate with high school students.
- ◆ Encourage your child to have fun, such as eating a snack, calling friends, starting an activity, playing a computer game, or watching a favorite show when homework is finished.
- ◆ Be a good listener and show interest in what your child is learning. Offer chances for your child to "teach" you. Putting concepts into their own words will reinforce learned material and lead to mastery. Set aside time for your students to share the skills and information they are acquiring with you.
- ◆ Help students study for tests by quizzing them on the material in a friendly manner. "Drive time" in the car is a great setting for this.
- ◆ Have your students imagine themselves as excellent students. Then brainstorm what needs to be done

Make Doing Homework A High Priority

- to make that a reality.
- ◆ **Make clear that you expect** your students to complete homework well.
 - ◆ **Establish a study routine.** Students should be in the habit of studying at the same time and in the same place each day. Students and parents should decide on the study routine together, taking into

- account other activities, family commitments, and favorite TV shows. Also, consider the child's ability to concentrate at different times of the day. Ideally, the family should agree upon a study time when the television and stereo are off, there are no phone calls or texts, and the entire family studies, reads, or completes paperwork.
- ◆ **Establish a place to study** with good lighting and a table or desk. Some students prefer to study in their own room. Others do better if they are studying at the kitchen table or other location near parental support. A computer may be helpful, or even required for some schoolwork. Some students are able to study with a little background noise such as music. Few students can study effectively in front of the TV, and most need uninterrupted quiet.
 - ◆ **Have supplies/equipment on hand** including binders, notebooks, paper, pencils, pens, assignment books, erasers, dictionaries, a calculator, ruler, computer, tape, glue, reference books and/or software programs. Parents can avoid last-minute panic by asking before dinner whether their child has all the supplies needed for that night's assignments.
 - ◆ **Demonstrate, and enforce,** that completing homework is a higher priority than other activities. A child should not watch TV and talk with friends before completing homework, unless time later in the day has been set aside for homework completing.
 - ◆ **Reduce activities** if a child has so many commitments that there is insufficient time or energy for academic work.
 - ◆ **Encourage your child to take advantage of available assistance.** Help is available in many formats and is often designed to specifically fit the nature of a given course. Students should be encouraged to optimize use of course Wikis, to contact teachers by email or phone, to meet with teachers on work day time, to study with fellow students on the bus or on work day, to use online



discussion boards, etc. Encourage your child to ask questions about things that are hard to understand.